



Children in Gaza long to return to school – the temporary education places fill up as soon as they open. Photo: Unicef

## UNICEF chief on site in Gaza: Situation remains critical

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**More emergency aid is coming into Gaza, but the situation for the residents has not improved significantly since the ceasefire came into effect.**

**– It is still a very, very difficult situation, says Jonathan Veitch, UNICEF's head in Palestine, on site in Gaza.**

A fragile ceasefire has existed between Israel and Hamas since [October 10, 2025](#). [During the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war, which led to closed border crossings, the amount of emergency aid to Gaza decreased significantly.](#)

Now the situation looks a little better, says Jonathan Veitch, who is special envoy in the Palestinian territories for the UN children's agency Unicef.

“We have managed to establish hundreds of primary care centers for basic care and 140 temporary training centers,” says Veitch, who is in Gaza.

GAZA →



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At the same time, the need for aid is enormous. Almost all schools and hospitals have been damaged or destroyed, and hundreds of thousands of people are living

in cramped tent camps without heat, according to reports from several UN agencies.

“The majority of Gazans are trying to survive one day at a time,” says Jonathan Veitch.

Israel has previously accused Hamas and other armed groups of stealing aid. According to Jonathan Veitch, such incidents have stopped as deliveries have increased, while all shipments are closely monitored by multiple parties.

– The system is robust, but it can change quickly if we don't get the supplies we need.

### Record aid from Sweden

UNICEF recently received [1.2 billion in Swedish support](#), 400 million from the government and 800 million from real estate billionaire Roger Akelius. Money that will make a big difference according to Jonathan Veitch.

“We will be able to repair some of the destroyed schools and begin to build up care for seriously ill children,” he says.

The need for temporary buildings that can serve as homes, rather than tents, is also great.

Higher temperatures are now expected in Gaza, which increases the risk of disease.

– We need to restore the water production and sewage system, and we have the expertise, but we haven't had the opportunity to get the components we need, says Jonathan Veitch.



Hear about why the fragile ceasefire is making it difficult for aid organizations in Gaza.  
Photo: Reuters

### “Stuck in a limbo”

Both Israel and Hamas accuse each other of [violating the ceasefire](#). Phase two of the ceasefire, which includes Hamas laying down its weapons and Gaza being rebuilt, began in January this year, according to the US.

But Israel and Hamas have not been able to agree on either disarmament or Israel leaving Gaza. This makes it difficult to have a long-term perspective in aid work, says Jonathan Veitch.

"Right now we are kind of stuck in limbo between a ceasefire and something else," he says.

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✉ **Eric Norman**

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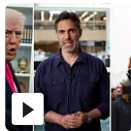
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